

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9185

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 10049

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR SECTION INFORMATION)

O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, IR

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRESS REPORT - IRAN

REF: STATE 233134

SUMMARY: IRAN HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED A TROUBLE SPOT IN THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS SCENE--AT LEAST FROM THE U.S. POINT OF VIEW--BECAUSE NARCOTICS ORIGINATING IN OR PASSING THROUGH IRAN HAVE NOT CONSTITUTED A THREAT TO THE U.S. THE LARGE OPIUM ADDICT POPULATION IN IRAN HAS, IN FACT, SERVED AS A MAGNET FOR ILLICIT OPIATES SMUGGLED INTO THE COUNTRY FROM ITS NEIGHBORS TO EAST AND WEST, THUS INTERCEPTING NARCOTICS WHICH MIGHT HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE U.S. THIS CONVENTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IRANIAN NARCOTICS SITUATION MAY BE UPSET BY RECENT SEIZURES, WHICH RAISE THE POSSIBILITY THAT TRAFFICKERS MAY BE ORGANIZING AN IRANIAN CONNECTION TO SERVE WESTERN MARKETS. SOME TENTATIVE SUGGESTIONS ARE MADE CONCERNING HOW THE MISSION SHOULD PROCEED IN WORKING
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WITH THE GOI TO ADDRESS THESE TRENDS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESENT SITUATION. DRUG ADDICTION IS A MAJOR NATIONAL PROBLEM IN IRAN. INFORMED ESTIMATES PLACE THE NUMBER OF OPIUM USERS AT BETWEEN 500,000 AND 600,000 WITH PERHAPS AS MANY AS 50,000 HEROIN ADDICTS. THE GOI HAS SOUGHT TO CONTAIN THIS PROBLEM BY (1) PROVIDING MINIMAL DOSAGES OF OPIUM TO REGISTERED ADDICTS, (2)) PURSUING VIGOROUS ENFORCEMENT OF STIFF DRUG LAWS, (3) INITIATING EDUCATION TO COUNTER DRUG ABUSE, AND (4) REHABILITATING ADDICTS. WHILE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN SOME AREAS, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DRUG EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION ASPECTS LAGS SERIOUSLY.

2. REGISTERED ADDICTS MUST BE EITHER OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE OR CERTIFIED AS TOO WEAK TO SURVIVE WITHDRAWAL, BUT REGISTRATION IRREGULARITIES DO OCCUR. LATEST FIGURES INDICATE THAT THERE ARE NOW 157,000 REGISTERED ADDICTS IN IRAN (COMPARED TO 118,000 IN DECEMBER 1972).

3. EACH YEAR THE MINISTRY OF COOPERATIVES AND RURAL AFFAIRS AUTHORIZES CULTIVATION OF THE OPIUM POPPY ON SUFFICIENT ACERAGE TO SUPPLY THE ESTIMATED NEEDS OF REGISTERED ADDICTS FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR. AT HARVEST TIME THE FIELDS ARE CLOSELY GUARDED BY THE GENDARMERIE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE GUM IS TURNED OVER TO THE NARCOTICS CONTROL ADMINISTRATION OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH FOR PROCESSING INTO OPIUM STICKS. NO SIGNIFICANT DIVERSION OF GOVERNMENT-PRODUCED OPIUM INTO ILLICIT CHANNELS IS KNOWN TO HAVE OCCURRED.

4. IF ONE ACCEPTS THE FIGURE OF 400,000 UNREGISTERED ABUSERS OF OPIUM AT A RATE OF CONSUMPTION OF 0.112 KILOGRAMS PER ABUSER PER MONTH, THIS WOULD INDICATE THAT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 500 AND 600 TONS OF OPIUM ARE SMUGGLED INTO IRAN EACH YEAR FOR ILLICIT USE. WHILE THESE FIGURES ARE ONLY INFERENCES BASED UPON THE SCANT EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE AMOUNT OF OPIUM SMUGGLED INTO IRAN IS LARGE AND THAT THE TRAFFIC IS HIGHLY ORGANIZED. THE PATTERN INVOLVES IRANIAN FINANCING, TRANSPORT ACROSS IRAN'S EASTERN BORDER BY PORTER OR PACK ANIMAL, TRANS-SHIPMENT TO TRUCKS OR JEEPS, AND DELIVERY TO ILLICIT DEALERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN PAST YEARS MOST OF THIS OPIUM CAME ACROSS THE

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AFGHAN BORDER IN THE VICINITY OF THAIABAD, BUT IN RECENT MONTHS THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A SHIFT SOUTHWARD TOWARD BALUCHI TERRITORY.

5. IN CONTRAST TO OPIUM ADDICTION, WHICH HAS A LONG HISTORY IN IRAN, ADDICTION TO HEROIN IS A RATHER RECENT PHENOMENON ORIENTED MORE TO THE CITIES AND TO A SOMEWHAT YOUNGER CLIENTELE. HEROIN ADDICTS ARE DEPENDENT ON ILLEGAL

SOURCES BUT HEROIN IS READILY AVAILABLE AND RELATIVELY IN-EXPENSIVE (ABOUT \$3.30 PER GRAM IN TEHRAN). THIS MARKET IS SUPPLIED BY ABOUT EIGHT-TEN HEROIN LABS USUALLY OPERATING IN TEHRAN OR THE PROVINCE OF AZERBAIJAN. MORPHINE BASE FOR THEM HAS COME ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FROM TURKEY. THE PRODUCT IS AN IMPURE, BROWN HEROIN WHICH IS GENERALLY SMOKED OR SNIFFED.

6. ABUSE OF HASHISH IS RELATIVELY MINOR IN IRAN ALTHOUGH CANNABIS SATIVA IS GROWN WIDELY FOR ITS SEEDS, WHICH ARE USED AS A RELISH. HOWEVER, LARGE QUANTITIES OF HASHISH ARE BEYOND ANY DOUBT TRANSITING IRAN FROM EAST TO WEST BY TIR TRUCK. THE SOURCE AREA IS AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN AND THE MARKET IS WESTERN EUROPE.

7. THE PRINCIPAL IRANIAN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE (1) THE NATIONAL POLICE, (2) THE IMPERIAL IRANIAN GENDARMERIE(IIG), AND THE IRANIAN CUSTOMS.

8. THE NATIONAL POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER IN ALL URBAN AREA OF 5,000 AND MORE INHABITANTS. RECENTLY A CENTRALIZED NARCOTICS BUREAU HAS BEEN REINSTATED WITHIN THE NATIONAL POLICE. AT THE PRESENT TIME THIS UNIT OF ABOUT THIRTY OFFICERS CONSTITUTES THE ONLY BODY OF MEN IN IRAN ASSIGNED, EQUIPPED, AND TRAINED TO CARRY OUT THOROUGH NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIONS. FOR THE TIME BEING, THESE INVESTIGATIONS ARE CONFINED TO TEHRAN ITSELF, BUT THE INTENT IS TO EXTEND OPERATIONS GRADUALLY TO ALL THE CITIES OF IRAN. IN THE SPRING OF 1972 DEA ESTABLISHED AN OFFICE IN THE TEHRAN EMBASSY TO WORK WITH THE NATIONAL POLICE. ITS FUNCTION HAS BEEN TO (1) EXCHANGE NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE, (2) PROVIDE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND ADVICE IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AND (3) ARRANGE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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TRAINING OF NATIONAL POLICE PERSONNEL BY U.S. EXPERTS. AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND MUTUAL TRUST HAS BEEN DEVELOPED.

9. THE IMPERIAL IRANIAN GENDARMERIE (IIG) CONSTITUTES THE LAW IN RURAL AND SMALL-TOWN IRAN, AND IN ITS ROLE AS GUARDIAN OF THE BORDERS IT IS A MAJOR ELEMENT IN IRANIAN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. FOR THIRTY-TWO YEARS THE U.S. ARMY HAS FURNISHED A SMALL ADVISORY STAFF TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE IIG IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ITS CAPABILITIES. INCLUDED IN THE STAFF AT THE U.S. MISSION TO THE IIG (KNOWN AS GENMISH) IS A NARCOTICS ADVISER. THE IIG TAKES ACTION AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WHEN IT COMES ACROSS IT, BUT IT HAS NOT CARRIED ON NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIONS AS SUCH.

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-05 IO-10

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-04 TRSE-00 USIA-06

NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01 SS-15 AGR-05 DODE-00 AID-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9186

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 10049

E.O. 11652: GDS

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NEVERTHELESS, GENMISH HAS EXPOSED 150 OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE IIG TO NARCOTICS TRAINING IN THE LAST TWO YEARS AND HAS ADVISED THEM ON THE ACQUISITION AND USE OF EQUIPMENT SUCH AS HELICOPTERS, MOTORCYCLES, AND NIGHT VISION DEVICES TO HELP APPREHEND SMUGGLERS. HOWEVER, IRAN IS SO LARGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT GENERALLY SO HOSTILE THAT SUCCESSFUL INTERCEPTION OF LARGE, HEAVILY-ARMED BANDS OF SMUGGLERS IS DIFFICULT. ANTI-SMUGGLING SQUADS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL ARE NOW BEING FORMED FOR INVESTIGATIVE WORK, INCLUDING DRUGS.

10. IRANIAN CUSTOMS CONTROLS TRAFFIC AND ASSESSES DUTY AT DESIGNATED BORDER CROSSING POINTS. THE INCENTIVE OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS TO SEARCH FOR NARCOTICS WILL NO DOUBT
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BE HEIGHTENED BY RECENT INTRODUCTION OF DRUG SEIZURE AWARDS OF THE SAME SORT ALREADY INSTITUTED BY THE NATIONAL POLICE AND THE GENDARMERIE. AT U.S. URGING, CUSTOMS HAS ALSO AGREED TO ADOPT THE USE OF BETTER SEALS FOR BONDING TRUCK CARGOES. THE NEW ONES WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO TAMPER WITHWITHOUT SUBSEQUENT DETECTION.

11. IRANIAN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS ARE BACKED UP BY SEVERE PENALTIES FOR OFFENDERS. THESE DEPEND, OF COURSE, ON THE QUANTITY AND DRUG INVOLVED AND THE NATURE OF THE CRIME, BUT AT LAST REPORT 247 PERSONS FOUND GUILTY ON NARCOTICS CHARGES HAVE BEEN EXECUTED IN THE FIVE YEARS THAT THE CURRENT LAWS HAVE BEEN IN EFFECT.

12. IN JULY OF THIS YEAR THE GOI ANNOUNCED AN ANTI-NARCOTICS DRIVE TO INCLUDE (1) A PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM ON DRUG ABUSE, (2) EVEN STRICTER DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AND (3) PROVISIONS FOR BROADENED TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION FOR ADDICTS. FOR SOME WEEKS THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY IN THE NEWS MEDIA, BUT THE ONLY KNOWN RESULT SO FAR HAS BEEN SOME ELABORATION OF THE DRUG LAWS, INCLUDING FOR THE FIRST TIME PENALTIES FOR TRAF- FICKING IN LSD.

13. THERE IS ALREADY A 120BED HOSPITAL IN TEHRAN DEVOTED TO DRUG ADDICTS, AND A NEW 500 BED HOSPITAL IN YAFTABAD WILL ALSO BE ASSIGNED FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE SOME 14 SMALLER ADDICT HOSPITALS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. NEVERTHELESS, UNTIL NOW THESE TREATMENT CENTERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN HELP THEIR PATIENTS THROUGH A THREE-WEEK WITHDRAWAL. FOR LACK OF TRAINED PER- SONNEL, A THROUGH REHABILITATION PROGRAM TO REINTEGRATE THE ADDICT INTO SOCIETY HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE RETURNEE RATE IS HIGH. DRUG EDUCATION IS PRACTICALLY NONEXISTENT.

14. IN INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MEETINGS IRAN HAS CONSIS- TENTLY SUPPORTED MEASURES TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN ILLICIT DRUGS. IRAN HAS ALSO COMMITTED ITSELF TO TOTALLY BANNING POPPY CUSTIVATION WITHIN ITS TERRITORY--IF ITS NEIGHBORS, TURKEY, AFGHANISTAN, AND PAKISTAN, DO LIKEWISE.

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15. RESEARCH IS BEING CARRIED ON IN IRAN WHICH GIVES PROMISE OF EVENTUALLY ALLEVIATING THE PROBLEM OF OPIATE ABUSE. THIS INVOLVES A WILD POPPY, PAPAVER BRAC TIATUM,

WHICH IS NATIVE TO IRAN AND FROM WHICH CODEINE MAY BE OBTAINED BY AN INDUSTRIAL PROCESS. PROF. LALEZARI OF TEHRAN UNIVERSITY, SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM USDA, REPORTS ENCOURAGING RESULTS IN HIS EXPERIEMENTS WITH THE CULTIVATION OF PAPAVER BRACIATUM. IF PRODUCTION CAN BE EXPANDED TO COMMERCIAL SCALE, THE GROWING OF PAPAVER SOMNIFERUM, THE OPIUM POPPY, COULD BE BANNED WORLDWIDE. THIS WOULD ELIMINATE LEGAL PRODUCTION OF OPIUM, WHICH SO READILY LENDS ITSELF TO DIVERSION INTO THE ILLICIT TRADE AND THEN IS SO EASILY CONVERTED INTO HEROIN.

16. TRENDS. RECENT SEIZURES SUGGEST THAT IRAN, UNTIL NOW LARGELY A VICTIM OF NARCOTICS PRODUCED NEARBY, IS PERHAPS ALSO A SIGNIFICANT CHANNEL--AND POSSIBLY EVEN A SOURCE--FOR DRUGS REACHING WESTERN EUROPE: (1) THE VOLUME OF HASHISH SEIZED TRANSITING IRAN INCREASED SHARPLY IN RECENT YEARS, AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF IRANIANS IN THIS TRAFFIC IS WELL DOCUMENTED. MOREOVER, LIQUID HASHISH HAS APPEARED IN APPRECIABLE QUANTITIES. (2) THE BALUCHIS APPEAR TO BE ENGAGED INCREASINGLY IN SMUGGLING OPIUM INTO IRAN FROM AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. THE PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THEIR HOMELAND, LYING AS IT DOES, ASTRIDE THE TRI-JUNCTION OF THREE COUNTRIES, MAKES EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SOUTHEAST IRAN PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. (3) THE OCTOBER 14, 1974, SEIZURE OF 32.7 KILOS OF FAIRLY HIGH-GRADE HEROIN IN TEHRAN TENDS TO SUBSTANTIATE A LONG-HELD CONCERN AMONG OBSERVERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS SCENE. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT IRANIAN OPERATORS ARE CAPABLE OF MAKING QUALITY HEROIN IN COMMERCIAL AMOUNTS AND THAT HEROIN CHEMISTS HAVE A CONNECTION WITH SOURCES OF OPIUM IN AFGHANISTAN AND/OR PAKISTAN. THIS IS THE FIRST HARD EVIDENCE OF SUCH A CONNECTION. (4) SINCE NO SUBSEQUENT INCREASE IN THE TEHRAN STREET PRICE OF HEROIN WAS OBSERVED, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS SHIPMENT MAY HAVE BEEN DESTINED FOR MORE LUCRATIVE MARKETS FURTHER WEST. THE SMUGGLERS COULD USE THE SAME TRANSPORT TECHNIQUES AND CONNECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED FOR HASHISH. THERE IS NO PROOF THAT THE INTENT WAS TO FORWARD
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THIS HEROIN TO EUROPE, BUT DEMAND, THE CHANNEL, AND THE SUPPLY WERE ALL THERE. THUS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DANGEROUS OPIATE FLOW TO FILL THE VACUUM CREATED BY DISRUPTION OF THE TURKEY-BASED SYSTEM IS AN ESPECIALLY DISTURBING POSSIBILITY.

17. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HEIGHTEN THE RESOLVE OF THE MISSION AND THE GOI TO IMPROVE OUR COMMON EFFORT TO CONTROL THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN NARCOTICS. IN THIS CONNECTION WE INTEND TO EXPLORE WITH THE GOI FURTHER AVENUES FOR DEVELOPING HARD NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE AND IN ASSISTING THE NATIONAL POLICE AND THE GENDARMERIE TO UPGRADE THEIR CAPABILITIES. THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL POLICE NARCOTICS UNIT IS BEING INVITED

TO THE UNITED STATES FOR EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TRAINING
AND TO CONSULT WITH SENIOR NARCOTICS OFFICIALS. IN APRIL 1975., WE
ALSO PLAN
TO SEND EIGHT CAREFULLY SELECTED NATIONAL POLICE OFFICERS TO A
SPECIAL NARCOTICS COURSE IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH WILL BE GIVEN IN
FARSI. THERE WILL ALSO BE ADDITIONAL NARCOTICS SEMINARS IN IRAN
CONDUCTED BY AMERICAN EXPERTS BROUGHT IN EXPRESSLY FOR THIS PURPOSE.
FINALLY, WE INTEND TO EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY ASSIST
IRAN IN DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION AND
REHABILITATION PROGRAMS, THE TWO AREAS IN WHICH THEY HAVE
FALLEN BEHIND IN THEIR OVERALL EFFORT.
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